

'God's Not Dead' and the Problem With Christian Apologetics

Recently I viewed the movie *God's Not Dead*, starring Kevin Sorbo as an atheistic philosophy college professor who openly challenges a **Christian** student to prove why his faith is scientifically true. The movie is well-written, has good acting, and is good enough to last more than a month in major movie theaters and make millions of dollars in profit.

I applaud that **Christians** are now infiltrating Hollywood and the cultural mountain of entertainment and making mainstream movies. This movie also was released around the same time as *Noah* (not a Christian movie, but a movie loosely based on the biblical narrative of Noah) and *Heaven Is for Real* and a few months after the movie blockbuster *Son of God*. Thank God Hollywood producers are finally realizing that movies with Bible-based themes are in high demand in the global market!

The *God's Not Dead* movie was able to quickly and succinctly present typical (conceptual) but complex challenges to **Christianity** and the Bible regarding evolution/creation, freedom of choice, the existence of evil and reductionism. Since it was presented as a major motion picture, the apologetics were basic and had some typical Christian clichés for answers. But all in all, it can serve as an intellectual buffer for many young Christians who are challenged in their faith by higher education.

The problem with this movie is that it bases the defense of **Christianity** on the false modern (Enlightenment) assumption that human reason is the final and highest arbiter of truth, thus setting it above God's revelation of Himself in the Scriptures. Hence, this movie illustrates how the basic

assumption of contemporary apologetics is faulty, because if our faith is upheld and proven by human reason, then unlearned Christian students attempting to use the arguments in this movie are also vulnerable in the future to an atheistic professor who could easily take advantage of their scientific and philosophical ignorance and poke holes through these basic arguments.

However, even more troubling is that even if a Christian wins a debate in apologetics, they really lost in the realm of ultimate truth, since they placed the foundation of the Bible upon modern empirical science, which means their presuppositions are actually the same as atheistic humanists. Christians who try to prove their faith by human reason have fallen into the false modern assumption that ultimate truth can be proven empirically by the five senses. Can you picture Jesus, the apostle Paul or the Old Testament prophets trying to bring conversions about by making a case for God based on contemporary human reason and science?

The innate and creational evidence for God is so great that the Bible never even attempts to prove His existence but starts the Scriptures by saying "In the beginning, God ...". Psalm 14 says that the fool has said in his heart there is no God. Romans 1:21 teaches us that all professed unbelievers are really secret believers. The prophets of the Old Testament, along with the New Testament apostles, were able to spread faith due to the incredible power they had with God, due to earnestly seeking His face and speaking to people with prophetic power and conviction (1 Thess. 1:4-5). When Paul spoke at the Areopagus in Acts 17, he didn't bother debating with his audience on their own philosophical grounds but assumed the biblical worldview, preached the risen Christ, and disparaged their prevailing polytheistic assumptions. Even when he quoted their poets, he quoted them in the context of the vortex of the biblical story without subsuming the biblical story to Greek philosophy!

Furthermore, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:21 that the world through its own wisdom cannot know God. When we, as Christians, try to borrow from modernity and science to prove our faith, we actually lose the ultimate debate even if we win the temporary debate! At the end of the day, apologetics and science are OK as long as they are limited in their scope and their purpose is to understand the language of Babylon and inform our bridge-building conversations with humanists and atheists.

If our faith rests upon ungodly Enlightenment presuppositions, we could be robbed of our prophetic power and could end up losing our faith since we are framing our beliefs on human reason, which assumes that logic has more weight than divine revelation. This also perpetuates human autonomy, which is the antithesis of both our faith and the biblical worldview.

Lest anyone think I am promoting a form of fideism (faith without reason), I believe Christianity has a worldview that is the most logical and rational of all other worldviews. (Even an atheist has to assume theism when attempting to prove atheism since they have to borrow from the Christian worldview to function and even to debate, which is why some atheists admit they are “cultural Christians.”) One of the greatest proofs of the Bible is the impossibility of the contrary—that is to say, biblical Christianity makes the most sense in this world because it comports the closest to reality.

In spite of this, at the end of the day, all of our logic is circular since human reasoning is finite and subjective. (Only God is absolutely objective.) Thus, no one can prove or disprove the existence of God; the best a Christian can do is show probabilities. (God cannot be proved empirically. However the arguments for design and the supernatural make Christianity’s teachings the most likely to be true of all competing religions and humanistic beliefs.)

At the end of the day, if a person can be talked into becoming

a Christian by clever logic-based apologetics, then someone else (e.g., an atheist) with more knowledge and skill in logic could come along and talk the new Christian out of their faith. This is why, according to John 3:3-5 and John 6:44, all humans need a personal/experiential encounter with the risen Lord Jesus in order to be truly converted!

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